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OF

SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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OTHER MEN'S FAILINGS.

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."—GAL VI., 2.

Many persons are caught with the most superficial contradiction. In the second verse, it says, "Bear ye one another's burdens"; and in the fifth it says, "Every man shall bear his own burden." As if both of them could not be true! As if a man carrying a burden for which he is especially responsible, might not have it lightened somewhat by one who walked by his side and helped him! As if a little child carrying a heavily laden basket—which it was his task and business to carry, and which he had to take care of—might not be helped by another child walking by his side, and taking hold of the handle; so that it might be said to one of them, "This is your burden, and you must see to it;" and to the other, "Help him with his burden." And yet, persons suppose, because in the second verse it is said, "Bear ye one another's burdens," and in the fifth, "Every man shall bear his own burden," that there is some contradiction here. No, there is coöperation. The responsibility is on each man to carry himself and his trials and troubles through life. All the more, therefore, as far as in us lies, we should help each other. For, *to bear one another's burdens* does not mean to take them off from one another's shoulders, but to help each other to carry them. We are to assist others in bearing their own burdens. We are to contribute to their strength and to their courage. We are to render them as much help as, by sympathy or otherwise, we may.

It is not, then, simply bearing the burdens of others as things which cannot be aided, but assisting them to bear their burdens, that is unquestionably meant in this passage. The context shows that.

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault——"

That is, *if a man stumble and fall.* Such is the force of the original. *Fault* may mean merely some minor form of wrong, as

SUNDAY MORNING, Jan. 28, 1872. Lesson: ROM. XIV. 1-13. Hymns (Plymouth Collection) Nos. 212, 531, 580.

the term has come to be understood in our time; or it may mean something more serious. It runs through the whole range of stumbling.

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one [lift him up on his feet, pick him up again], in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

The apostle is never satisfied that we should simply have Christian graces. He wants those graces polished. It was not enough for him to say that we are to restore a man. We are to do it *beautifully*. We are to do it in such a spirit of meekness that it shall be like conferring a favor. We are not to stand and laugh and sneer at, and ridicule a man who has fallen, and then with an air of proud superiority say, "Well, I will help you." If a man falls, we are to draw near to him just as if we had ourselves fallen; that is, with such a consciousness of our fallibility, with such gentleness and sweetness, that our sympathy and love will be balm and healing to him.

"Restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

It is in this connection that the command is given,

"Bear ye one another's burdens."

While this does not exclude the bearing of burdens of a physical character—the ordinary troubles and trials of life—it does not stop at these. Whatever thing tends to bend a man, to warp him in his habit of thought, in the conduct of his moral feelings, in the administration of his affections, in the whole range of his social life; whatever may be a man's imperfection, or misdemeanor, or fault, or failing, the command is—"Help him!" Do not sting him by criticism. Do not punish him in any way. Do not neglect, and do not merely blame him. Consider that we are helpers one of another, and that there is no place where a man needs help so much as inside, and in the conduct of that fiery team which every one of us is attempting to drive. Horses of the sun are our passions, and each man is a charioteer, and we need assistance. And we are to help each other in the greatest work which can be conceived of—the attempt of a man to carry himself with all his frowning passions, and with all the strength of the feelings which are in him, safely, through life, so as to grow better and better.

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and [to make it stronger yet] so fulfill the law of Christ."

These things are to be done because they are commanded. And the law of Christ is none other than the law of love. But, it seems to me, no man can fulfill it without help. There are

ethical difficulties which play between one judgment and another, as to how to administer severity with kindness, and pain with restoration, and how to administer blame and rebuke and reproof, which also are commanded, so that on the whole the effect shall be medicative, and so that the act shall be full of gentleness, and sweetness, and love. That, no man can do by rule. You cannot lay down rules as to how it shall be done. No man can do it except by the intuitions of love. He who has a heart as full of love as a mother's, will do as a mother does who knows how, with infinite variations, according to time and circumstances, to adapt herself to her children. It is the great tide of love by which she ministers to them, though she checks them, and punishes them, and reproves them; and rebukes them, and puts them back there, and draws them forward here. Nobody could tell her how to do that most difficult, that most complex, that finest and most subtle work. There is nothing on earth like a mother's guidance of her children to manhood or womanhood. No frescoes that artist hand ever put on temple, no statue that ever was carved, no picture that ever was painted, no cathedral that ever was built, implies such deep and everlasting skill, springing from qualities which are to be everlasting, as the building up of a man or a woman, out of the elements which go to make the brightest character. The building of it is transcendent, measured by whatever scale or scheme you please. And she does it, not by rule, nor wholly by principle, though she may have some rules and some principles. It is the simple intuitions of love that tell her how to do it.

The apostle says, "If a man has faults, restore him in the spirit of meekness." And who has not faults? Who is not slipping and stumbling all the time? There is snow all the year, and men are sliding continually. There are stumbling-blocks on every road, and men are pitched headlong over them perpetually. Pitfalls and snares are on every side of us; and every man is going wrong all the while. The Word of God says:

"Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit [who thinks he does not go wrong]? there is more hope of a fool than of him."

And yet, we are all the time going wrong, and are alongside of men who are doing the same thing. Saith the Spirit of all love and wisdom, "If any man is going wrong, help him; if he stumble, lift him up; if he fall, restore him; and do it in the spirit of meekness, remembering that you are yourselves like him liable to the same misfortune, and in need of the same treatment. Bear one another's burdens; help one another in your failings and wrong tendencies: and do it in the spirit of the great law of love, so fulfilling the law of Christ."

Christ-like piety, then, may be known not only by its purity and by its abhorrence of evil in one's self, but by its gentleness and helpfulness toward those who are evil; and that, not toward those alone who are professionally evil—the great sinner, the outcast, the criminal, and the vicious. In our dealings with each other, if we be true Christians after the pattern of Christ, the temper of that love which the Divine Spirit quickens and developes in us is to be medicating; it is to be nourishing; it is to be healing. There is a duty often, and a necessity, of emphasizing the guilt of sin. We must not suppose that because Christian love helps, and because true spiritual conditions help, they never analyze, expose, blame, or inflict suffering. It is impossible to teach right and wrong to the budding nature or a child in the same way that you can produce a moral shock over against wrong deeds and feelings in an adult; and pain is often the best mode of doing it. It may seem a rude way, but it is an indispensable way, thus far, in human life. Pain and penalty are the natural results of wrong, as, conversely, pleasure and reward are of right. Parents must rebuke in their children tendencies to impurity, to selfishness, to temper, to dishonesty, to falsehood, and to a hundred shades of these things.

Here is a child that has not been brought up with moral discrimination. He has been neglected in this regard. Though he may intellectually and æsthetically have had every advantage, and may have been profited; yet the child who has not had that training, one of whose factors was pain-producing, has not been rightly educated by his parents. Conscience has not been developed and exercised in him. He has not been taught to discern between good and evil, right and wrong. It is indispensable that guardians and teachers, in bringing up their wards and pupils, should make discriminations between right and wrong, and should, by some inward experience of pain or rebuke so educate their moral sense that they should themselves, by and by, be able to interpret these qualities.

Men in representative capacities are also obliged to authenticate right, and defend it against wrong, by painful means.

It is true, then, that the higher the scale in which we act, the more clumsy are the instruments which we employ. Our competency to administer love is more signal, but still imperfect, where we stand in a small circle—in the family. We diminish power in this direction when we undertake to carry out this law and spirit into the whole neighborhood. And when we attempt to administer general laws and institutions in the whole community, it must be said that the system which we are obliged to pursue is a bungling system of expedients, rather than a wise system. The best laws are

coarse, and the best administrations are notoriously imperfect, and the attempt to administer the whole community by the law of love exposes the inadequacy and miserable inefficiency of men's wisdom and moral sense more than anything else.

Therefore it is that we feel that laws are but feelings after right, and that courts are but the rudest forms of administration, and that penalties inflicted by society are mostly empirical, and to a very large extent involve an element of injustice. Of ten men standing together in Sing Sing to-day, and working there for the same crime, there are not two that have had the same justice meted out to them. There was no consideration taken of their nature, to begin with. There was no consideration taken of the circumstances of their education, nor of the temptations under which they fell. There was no consideration taken of the scope of the mischief which they had caused. For stealing, one man was sent there for a year; another man who was less culpable was sent for five years; and another man who was still less culpable, judging as God judges, was sent for ten years. So society mismeasures. There is no equality, no symmetry, no justice of measuring between right and wrong. Nevertheless what we are doing is the best we can do.

I would not let a man put his harrow into my flower-beds, I trow. Nothing but the fingers will do when you are working with delicate flowers to weed them out. But if I have twenty acres of land devoted to a corn crop, it cannot all be weeded with the fingers; and I have to take a hoe or a plow. It is rude, and coarse, and rough; but the magnitude of the task obliges me to take second or third-rate instruments.

Men take the justice of society and transfer it to God; they take the idea of an earthly magistrate and apply that to the character of God; they take the blunders and imperfections of human society, its basilar qualities, and from them they infer the divine disposition; whereas, it should be the other way. We should infer the nature of God, and of his moral government, from the best things in men, acting on the best side, and under the best circumstances. The household, not law, reveals God in Christ. It is the domestic side of God that Christ has revealed to us; and that is effulgent, transcendently bright.

I was saying that we must sympathize with the wrong doings of men to this extent: that we should be tender and helpful of them notwithstanding their faults. This does not imply, as I have said, that we should never inflict pain, or administer rebuke, in the development of moral culture. These are necessities. Oftentimes kindness requires that we should employ them. But there is a duty

that, while we give pain, it should be given in the spirit of imparting pleasure. When we rebuke, we are to do it, not in the spirit of anger, but in the spirit of pity and of sorrow. We are to help men by giving them pain, as well as by not giving them pain; but when we do give pain, it is to be given with a feeling of well-wishing.

A profound sense of the weakness and sinfulness of man is indispensable to any intelligent charity. The older I grow, the more I am satisfied of the sinfulness of man; and the older I grow the more I am satisfied that the certainty of universal sinfulness leads to charity. If I felt that men were all capable of the highest development, that would be the ideal with which I should measure them; if I felt that it was possible for the multitude of men to carry themselves above a certain average, I should condemn them according to this conviction; but believing men to be universally weak, and dropping out of weakness into infirmity easily, and easily stepping from infirmity into sin, this sense of the weakness and liability of men is the gauge by which I measure them. I do not hold them to a stringent, unyielding rule of conduct. I do not expect that they will not fall. I know that they will fall. I know that they will sin through their understanding and their moral sentiments, and yet more through their passions and appetites. I know that they will sin even in circumstances which are favorable for virtue. But that they will sin under the stress of temptation, I certainly know.

There is no man that lives who does not sin. There is no man that lives who cannot be made to sin. All men could not be made to sin in the same way. Some men cannot be made to sin by meat and drink. Others can. And of those who cannot be made to sin by meat and drink, some can be made to sin by temptations of money. There is many and many a man whose morals are pure enough, but whose avarice is as intense as a furnace of fire; and he might be made to sin there. He might not at one, or two, or three degrees, but he might at twenty or thirty degrees. Some are fusible at a low temperature, like lead, and others require the compound blow-pipe to fuse them; but there is no man who cannot be fused at some point. Some may be warped by their sympathies and affections who could not be by their pride. But though one might not be toppled over by pride, he might by vanity. And though one might not be made to yield by vanity, he might be led into compliance by benevolence and gentleness and good-will. Some men can be overcome in one way, and some in another. Somewhere or other there is a joint in the harness through which the arrow could go. The implication is that every man is temptable, and that no man, being tempted, has power to cure himself.

Will not the grace of God save a man? Yes, the grace of God may; but the man's own efforts will not save him. He may be saved by social institutions, or he may be saved by the direct inshining of the Divine Spirit. He may be saved in various ways. The question is as to the resisting power which inheres in human nature itself; and I say that there is no man, however well he may be built, however many virtues he may possess, however numerous his good tendencies may be, who is exempt from sins. There is no man who is not liable, not only to faults and foibles, but to vices and crimes. Not every man is given to every sort of wrong. Some men are built on the pattern of a hare, and you could not make them act like a lion; but they act as hares do. Some men sin as foxes do. Some men sin as serpents do. Some men sin as buffaloes, and some as elephants do. Some men are rude and aggressive, and some are slight and insinuating. Each man will sin according to his own nature and disposition. Somewhere sin can find entrance into every man. No man can stand and look at his fellow men and say, "Bah! the riff-raff, miserable creatures, have no sense of character or elevation. There is no need of their being as they are. It is all wishy-washy sentimentalism to talk of men's being naturally liable to sin. They ought not to sin." The man who talks so is himself a recreant sinner. In the very act of condemning men, without pity or sympathy, he is a transgressor of the law of God, and he stands right in the range of those terrific balls which Christ shot from his artillery, when he said, "Woe, unto you, scribes and Pharisees!" It was the selfishness of the moral sentiments in the Pharisees that brought down such terrible denunciation upon them.

The curative sympathy of men does not lead them to look lightly upon transgression. At any rate, it need not. If it does, it is because it is unwisely administered. Sympathy with men on the part of Christian people, founded on the certainty of universal sinfulness, universal weakness and universal temptableness, does not lead them more easily into wrong; but it is essentially curative.

In our great conflict, now happily passed, the soldier, standing in his ranks, and dealing death or wounds, was a witness for loyalty. Many and many an adversary was destroyed. Many and many a one was maimed and taken prisoner, and brought into the hospitals within our lines. And then came the soft hand of the sympathetic nurse. For it was not then thought unwomanly for women to leave their households to attend to public affairs. It was not then thought that woman was not fit to organize, when she organized this whole nation into comprehensive systems, and administered them as no men ever administered.

When the rebel comes into the hospital, and finds himself nourished, and with growing health and strength dealt gently and kindly with, little by little his heart is turned back again; so that when, looking through the opening of his tent, or through the hospital door, he sees the old flag, memories steal over him, and tears run down on his pillow; and with the shout that he hears raised to that old flag, he feebly shouts. Once more he is restored to his right mind, and he loves the flag again. And tell me, does not the kindness of the nurse work cure of his disloyalty as much, and more than the sword did? Is not her kindness as much a witness of his wrong-doing as the avenging phalanx?

The boy that has done wrong is punished all the way home for fear of punishment; and his father, whom he dreads, catches him at some unlucky turn, and, by a sound whipping he is put on his feet again! But he is not half as much restored (if I recollect right!) as when, going home from the transgression, he meets the eye of his mother, who fondly puts her arms about him, and simply looks into his eye sorrow, and reproach, of the gentlest and sweetest kind; and he, unable to lift up his little shamed head, nestles under her arm, and cries, and says he is sorry; and she kisses him, and says, "I believe you are, my dear child," and lets him go. Is not he whipped to a better purpose by her than he was by his father?

Not that the rod is not sometimes and somewhere useful; but, after all, there is much more efficacy in sympathy wisely administered. Men do not so much need to have a knowledge of their sinfulness burnt into them. Ordinarily, men know all that they need to know; and they carry a suppressed conscience with them. There is an inward feeling which they do not dare to let out. But if you meet such men with blame, they stoutly defend themselves. If you punish them, they bear up against punishment.

It used to be a matter of pride in school for us boys to take punishment bravely. When I had thrown paper-balls, and missed the master (to my great regret), and I was called out, and, holding out my hand, I took the strokes of the rattan, twenty, twenty-five, thirty of them, and took them without flinching, like an Indian, did I not know that all the boys behind me were watching, and saying, "Bravo! there's a hero for you!" and did I go not back to my seat triumphing in my little iniquity? But if I perform the same misdemeanor in school, and my master detains me, and says a few words to me, telling me how hard it is for him, in his feeble and nervous state of health, to carry on the school; that it is a great burden to him; and that if his scholars would help him, he could help them better; and if he kneels down with me (oh woe!) and

prays with me (I could beg him on my knees, "Do whip me, but do not pray"), and his manner is all tenderness, I feel, "Catch me throwing anything at him again, or annoying him in any way!" And it is kindness that has wrought the change in me.

Men have an impression which is wrong both ways. They think that severity is inconsistent with benevolence. Oftentimes it is a necessity of benevolence to be severe. And they are just as much mistaken when they suppose, on the other hand, that kindness shown, even that which has not in it an element of conviction or condemnation, is taking part with transgression. I aver that the way to deal with a man is to arraign him in the court of his own conscience, and convict him of wrong, and set in motion in him that enginery by which the wrong shall be ejected and the right reinstated; and I say that kindness is that which puts the heart in a better state for repentance and right-doing than any other instrumentality.

These things were found out in the household long ago. In a sort of way they are found out in theology; yet theology is but a clumsy reproduction of them. You never can reproduce that which is simply an emotion in the form of an idea. You cannot change a feeling into a definite statement. I should like to have you put music into words. Did you ever hear a man who could not sing undertake to describe a tune, and show how it runs along? Can you give a description of a piece of music which shall enable a person to understand it who has never heard it? Can you describe, so that it shall be understood in every line and lineament, by one who has never experienced it, the gush of a heroic love which so beats in a man's blood that it transforms every organ, clearing his eye, and making it a crystalline lens, bringing down the heavenly state, and giving a glory to all things which before were homely? Can any language define it, philosophize it, systematize it, and make it appear like itself? All that you can do by way of conveying ideas of such intangible elements as those of the feelings or emotions of the soul, is to have mnemotechnic words—words which, if you have had the feelings, suggest them, and reproduce them in yourself.

But no words can define, and no philosophy can explain, the potency and power of benevolence, to one who has had no experience of the thing itself. We know it better in the lower experiences of the household than ordinarily it is known in the church, or than ever it was known in society at large.

The applications of this truth, which I have sufficiently illustrated, are many. A few of them the remaining time will allow us to make.

First, no man has a right to be absorbed in his own piety. No

man has a right to confine himself to the building up of his own character. No man has a right to feel that if he keeps himself unspotted from the world, he has done his whole duty. A great many men can do this, comparatively speaking. A man can avoid temptations to dishonesty if he withdraws himself from the business of life, and lives a recluse. A man can cease to have envy, and jealousy, and rivalry if he lives solitarily. But no man has a right to become selfish for the sake of building up an ideal character in himself. We were born to live together; and no man has a right to shirk the responsibilities of social life. In social life, no man has a right to disconnect himself from his fellow men, and seek his own good by separations from society in general. That man whose only concern is to make his thoughts just, and his conscience true, and his moral sentiments accurate, and his affections right, and to hold them in an inward sympathy, so that he shall live harmoniously with himself, and in communion with God, is using piety to make himself exquisitely selfish. A man is bound to seek to build up others as well as himself.

We are emigrants crossing over the plain together. God has mixed things in this world. We are trying to so select and bring things together that they shall be just alike; but God keeps them mixed. All classes of people are thrown together. You cannot sift out the poor from the community. The rich may buy land, and lay out streets, and build houses, and keep away from people that are low, and not allow emigrants to come near them—in a little corner they can do it; but in some way or other an equivalent will come up. The poor are indispensable to the rich. The roots of the prosperity of the rich grow among common folks. The life of a tree is dependent upon its roots. If the bottom suffers, the top will suffer also. And so men are dependent upon each other. You can not get out of your social connections in society. We are mixed up, good and bad, honest and dishonest, just and unjust, mean and honorable. Men plead that, in all the innumerable ways in which they are brought in contact with their fellow men, they are tired of men. Well, I am tired of men, too; and what do I do? Just what I do when I am tired of any thing else. I go to sleep, and become rested and refreshed, and then get up and go at it again.

Men think of a society where all breaths shall be breaths of love, and truth, and honor, and excellence. Yea, verily, let us all aspire after this. But at present you cannot have it. You are in a world where God says that it is the duty of the strong to bear with the weak. It is the duty of light to take care of darkness. It is the duty of health to take care of sickness. It is the duty of honesty

to take care of dishonesty. It is the duty of purity to take care of impurity. It is the duty of stability to look after the unstable and the wavering. It is the duty of every higher impulse that Christ inspires in the soul of man to train itself as a Physician and a Saviour toward those who are deficient. That is the law of development according to the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. No man has a right, therefore, to put himself in a crystal cave, and have his virtues sing to him like so many canary birds. You must plunge into the battle, and take your part and lot with men, and help them, and that just where they most need help, and oftentimes in the things which are least congenial to your feelings.

The spirit of this passage forbids, also, that we should rejoice in iniquity; that we should gloat over evil. I never saw anybody sit, in a summer's day, and lay bare his leg, and take a paper of pins, and commence sticking them in for his amusement. I have seen men have their hair brushed because they enjoyed it. Generally speaking, when I see men taking to anything naturally, I say "It is because they like it." When I see a man read every murder in the newspaper—every single case of *crim. con.* in the courts; when I see a man eating carrion every day, morning, noon, and night, hunting for it, I say to myself, "He likes it." I make up my mind that he does rejoice in iniquity. I am convinced that there is something in this garbage which meets a want in his nature. As for myself, I should as soon set up my dwelling in the common sewer of New York, as to dabble in the stench pools of the criminal columns of our daily papers, which pour out the hell at the bottom of society every day—mud, mud, mud—fetid, foul, stinking mud. We spread these papers before us at our breakfast tables, and pick out a bit of carrion here, and a bit of carrion there, going through all the details of crimes, and vices, and misdemeanors of life which have been dragged to the surface. I tell you, a pure nature does not rejoice in iniquity. There is in iniquity something so solemn, or so repulsive, or both, that the pure and upright nature cannot bear it. If it be needful, we may go to it as a surgeon goes to the ulcer, not because he likes ulcers, but because he has to cure them; but if we cannot do this, if we are not called to medicate it, then we ought to thank God that we are not obliged to meddle with it. And I mark it as one of the things to be marveled at, that there are in society so many men who are good in other respects, that there are so many pure persons, that there are so many womanly natures, that there are so many whose virtues in many particulars are I know transcendently beyond mine, who yet seem to have a positive longing for morbid news, of the morbid passions,

of the worst parts of men, under the worst temptations. I do not understand, I *cannot* understand, why it is vulgar to meddle with excrement in the house, and not vulgar to meddle with the excrement of human society. There is a touch of the animal in us yet. The beast is big in mankind to this day.

This bearing one another's burdens, in the sense in which I have interpreted it—in the sense, namely, of not taking pleasure in the faults and failings of men; of not criticising them; of not rejoicing in them nor in their outcomes, but of tenderly and meekly helping the subjects of these to overcome them—this is pre-eminently a duty whose sphere is the household.

Children love to tease children; and they very soon find out where they can tease them. One child is very sensitive to praise; and the others very soon know how to nip him; and they will torment him through his love of praise. Another child is proud; and his companions know just how to employ his pride to make him wince. Another child is selfish; and those with whom he associates are all the time getting hold of his things, and pulling them away from him, and annoying him. Another child is timid, and his fear is the instrument by which he is teased and annoyed. As fear is the most terrible feeling which one can experience, so playing upon fear in a child is the cruelest savageism. In the cases of how many children in whom fear is a predominant faculty, is it not succored, is their burden not borne nor made lighter, but is this element in them employed as a rod with which to plague and annoy them! The whole system of teasing in the household is contrary to the spirit of this maxim.

There are two kinds of teasing—one saccharine, and the other acetous. There are men who tease you; and on the whole you rather wish they would. They know how to do it dexterously. It is done by a finer intelligence, by a shrewder mirth; and there is an element of mercy in it. It is done in the interest of kindness. So that, although a man may start for the moment, yet the reflection brings something sweet and pleasant. It is not unfrequently the case that a man may by teasing convey instruction, and even offer criticism, in a manner that shall be most acceptable. But, on the other hand, the acetous teasing is done in the spirit of hurting, and it does hurt; and the person teased does not enjoy it. This kind of teasing is wicked in the family. The parent is bound, not simply to blame the child, but to help it bear its burdens; to lend it his strength where it is weakest and the most liable to break down.

I think that among ordinarily organized children, nineteen out of twenty of those that learn to lie (and I think that nineteen out

of every twenty children do learn to lie), are taught to do it by the indiscretion of the parent. The child does wrong. He is very sensitive both to blame and to punishment. He is convicted of having done wrong. What did he do? He wandered into the pantry, and there he saw, and smelled, and felt, and tasted, the new-made doughnuts. This was contrary to the rule. It was a thing which is forbidden in every well regulated family! The child is suspected, from various symptoms. It would be better if now the child were remembered to be a little child, and very sensitive to shame and to pain. If the parent does remember it, and sees that the child is not intimidated into lying, the child may be saved; but it is, "George, have you been into that pantry?" "No, ma'am," says George. What is that lie? It is the involuntry shield which the child throws up to protect itself from the parental stroke. The parent teaches the child to lie in self-defense. The parent should stand between the child and temptation, and take heed not to lead it into temptation by untoward discipline and temper and haste. It is the indiscretion of the parent, oftentimes, that breaks down the truthfulness that is beginning to be established in the little child. We are to bear each other's burdens; and little children have burdens that ought to be sought for and borne by those who have outgrown their childhood—though I am sorry for those who have outgrown their sympathy with childhood. They have outgrown themselves, and the best part of themselves.

The same law holds between school companions. They have no right to subject each other to ridicule and unnecessary shame or pain by indifference, by exposure, or by penalties affixed to that side where they are weakest.

It is especially wicked to take the strong point in ourselves, and with it cut against the weak point in our companions. Here is a man who is knit together on purpose to succeed. He is organized like a machine for weaving, which will certainly carry the thread and produce the fabric of success. He has in his make-up something of the sterling qualities which have been handed down from his grandfather, from his father, from his ancestors on his father's and mother's sides, for generations back. He is like a bag in a mill which hangs below, and receives all that is put into the hopper and ground above. The tendencies and trainings of unknown generations behind come down into him. He finds himself intelligent and active. It is easy for him to do things. And he is tired to death of that shiftless brother of his, of whom he says, "If I have helped him once, I have helped him twenty times. If I stand him up he is like an empty bag, and down he goes; and if I fill him up, he is

as limpsy as before, and down he goes again." Now, the truth is, you inherited the excellences which make you so much superior to him. They were never bestowed on him either by inheritance or training. He was made as he is. He could no more do as you do unaided, than a mowing-machine could cut grass without being drawn. And you who do well by an imperious necessity, unjustly stand over against him who never does well, to criticise, and annoy, and blame him, and finally to cast him off and get rid of him, saying, "I cannot stand it any longer."

Every man who is strong ought to have buttoned to him one or two of these shiftless men, that he, having organized power, may take care of them, they having it not.

Men say, "Oh, that we could have a society from which was purged all those hindrances which we meet on every hand!" Ah yes; you would like a society that should be like a chariot, and that should bear you through life without any drawback to your ease and happiness. But this world is too poor for that. It is a world in which it is our duty to help each other. We are mixed up, the strong and the weak, the wise and the foolish, the good and the bad; and we must exchange kindness, and take hold of hands, and march together in the right way.

Here is a person who is by nature orderly. Every drawer is foreordained for some special use. This is for the collars; this is for the linen; this is for the jewelry; this is for the shoes. Every closet is as much appointed to its function, as trees are to the bearing of leaves.

To such an orderly creature comes, sometimes, by birth, a child who has not a particle of order. And the mother is all amazement. (The standing wonder of every family, is, "Where did this child get these traits?" And the standing reply of the father is, "Not from me, my dear;" and of the mother, "Not from me!") In some mysterious way, far back, doubtless, there was a drop of blood which came in carrying the element of disorder with it; and it breaks out in this member of the family.

The development of traits in others which are the exact opposite of ours, is made the excuse for unreasonable blaming and punishing; whereas we are commanded to bear the burdens of others—in the sense of helping those burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ.

A man who is naturally dry, is immensely shocked at folks who are naturally juicy. A man whose tongue can seldom be waked up, and then only in monosyllables, gravely criticises the man whose tongue rattles perpetually, and who talks, not by the impetus of

thought, but simply by the general impulse to say something. A genius to talk is as much born in a man without regard to whether he has anything to say or not, as a genius not to talk. A man who has energy cannot bear folks who have none. A man who is courageous and hopeful, and sees only success ahead—how he derides a man who is timid and desponding! "That fellow," you say, "had a chance to start with me; but he stood and shivered, and did nothing, and now he is a miserable wretch; while I went on and have been successful." You went on simply by reason of your peculiar organization. You are constitutionally courageous; and your business was to have imparted something of your courage to him—you ought to have borne his burden. You are naturally soft and gentle, and that man is naturally blunt and harsh; so you avoid him as you would a cliff. But that is not right. You ought to throw your graces over him, and cover him, as a vine runs over the cliff and makes it most glorious by the leaves which it puts out.

In the same line is that conceit which we have of our excellence and of others' deficiencies, where our excellence has been the result of our circumstances in life, and their deficiencies the result of the conditions in which they are living. There are a great many persons who are walking, to-day, in undisguised wickedness through the street, whom the Lord Jesus Christ does not blame as much as he does you, who are unsullied in your purity—such is the distance between their circumstances and yours, and such was the distance between their childhood influences and yours.

There are poor wretched women in New York whom you would not walk one square by the side of, for the sake of your reputation, —no, not to save them. There are persons that you revolt from; and yet, if the dear Master was here on earth, very likely he would say to you what he once said in the faces of men—"The publican and the harlot shall go into the kingdom of God before you." They inherited imperative qualities of evil. They were brought up by parents who taught them transgression as a filial duty. They were left unsheltered to every wind of temptation. They are living among men as beasts live among beasts, with none to teach, none to help, none to succor. Their mothers' arms were the cradle of iniquity. And their evil course, which, under the circumstances, is almost as natural as that water should flow down a channel, we look upon with loathing. Yet, if we had been living in their circumstances, we should have been worse than they are. We are better than they are, not on account of any virtue of our own, but on account of our organization—because it pleased God to put us in a

fort, and them on the plain. They were taken captive, while stone walls defended us. It was our circumstances that saved us.

I do not say that such protection is not a blessing. It is. But we should temper our judgment. We should think how much we owe to our opportunities; to the public sentiment around about us; to the families with which we have associated; to education; to what our father and mother did in us. It is these things that make us what we are. It is not our own excellence. It is nothing that we ourselves have done. By the grace of God, we are what we are. We are not to take that goodness in us which is the gift of a favoring Providence to make us arrogant critics, and censors, and punishers of that which is bad in those who are below us, and which is the result of their less favorable circumstances.

Now having given illustrations enough to enable you to apply this principle in all the phases of your life, let me say that in my own experience I have found one thing that has been more provocative of good results, and has helped me more, than any other. I am naturally passionate, and combative, and defensory. If any man thinks I do not know how to strike, he misjudges very much. Naturally, my first impulse is to strike; but as I grow older I like striking less and less. Less and less, I have that feeling which would repay evil with evil. More and more, I am moved to return good for evil, according to the example of Christ. I do it with great imperfections, and under strong temptations, now and then missing—every other time, perhaps; but this one thing I do: *forgetting the mistakes that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*, to be manifested by a life of gentleness and forbearance, not for myself, but for others. And the thing which helps me all the time is this: "What has Christ done for me? What am I before him? Can there ever a man come to me the discrepancy between whom and me is so great as that between me and Christ? What patience, what kindness, what nourishing love, what wonderful sparing mercy does Christ manifest, all the day long, toward me, that am before him relatively distorted, a cripple, hateful in thought and feeling, with innumerable wrong deeds! And who am I that I should refuse to extend some gentleness, and love, and kindness toward those around about me who have offended me?

What is being a Christian? It is having in you the spirit of Christ. It is loving the unlovely. It is forgiving your enemies. It is helping those who are imperfect and hateful. It is bearing one another's burdens. It is bearing with the weak, and not seeking to

please yourselves. It is this cross-bearing in love that makes you disciples of Christ, and not the fact that you believe this, that, or the other creed. It is having in you the mind and will, the spirit, of Christ.

Brethren, if you have intelligence while you are dying, and you look back on your way of life, I do not think you will recall your property-building with any particular pleasure. You may not recall it with displeasure; but I do not think it will be the things that you have gathered about you that will cheer you in that hour. I do not think the praises, the honors, or the comforts you have had, and the happiness you have experienced, will be the things that you will remember then. But if, when you are about to have the veil taken away, there shall come up to you the thought of the men whom you have succored, of the poor that you have befriended, of the ignorant that you have taught, of the children who would have perished ignominiously had it not been for you, but who have grown up to honor and usefulness; if, as the effulgence of the long-expected land is about to break upon you, you have the witness that the life which you have lived in the flesh, you have lived by the faith and in the spirit of the Son of God, and that from earth you are going to God—then the experiences of your dying love will be as sweet as angel voices to you. When the flesh shall fail, there will troop about you bands of blessed angels that shall be your convoys, and shall bear you up, and bring you home to Him, a spark of whose love in you has led to benevolent self-denials in your life.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Almighty God, we thank thee for the revelation which thou hast made through Jesus Christ our Lord of thy love and of thy goodness. Thy power and thy justice we have learned in the things which have been created around about us. We can discern in nature that trangression is guilty and punishable, and that pain waits on defect and transgression. But that there was pardon, and that love had healing in it—this thou hast taught us in Jesus. This thou art teaching us in our own experience, now exalted and made morally significant. We read the concealed meanings of things in the parental relation; in the life of friends; in love one toward another. And we rejoice that thou art making sacred, with the impress of thine own interpretation, things before esteemed natural and common, that through them we may interpret God, and augment and magnify all that which in us is imperfect, rendering it infinite and glorious and perfect. We rejoice that there is a home, a summer, a land of perfectness, beyond this world; and that we are not as those who drift upon an unknown stream, knowing not whither it shall carry them. We rejoice that the stream of life bears us toward the better land. We rejoice to believe that thou art gathering there, on every side, those who are to be saved. We rejoice that thou art making

heaven rich with the noble ones who have been transformed by thy grace upon earth, and who here in disguise were the sons of God, made known there; often mute here, but breaking forth in songs there; humble and obscure here, but shining as the stars of the firmanent there; the lowest and the last here, but the first and the most glorious there. We rejoice not only that thou art making heaven rich, but that thou art making it dear and attractive, because there are so many there whom we have known; because we are able to interpret something of it by our human sympathy. We follow after those who with tears we followed to the grave. We go through the grave by faith, that we may find them who were not given up, but who are ours forever. We must needs find them in the heavenly land; and we hover around about them in our thoughts. And so heaven is made bright to us. It is no longer a cold city built of stone, or of crystal, or of gold shining afar off: it is the summer land in the soul. And there our hearts are, where our treasure is. And we rejoice that thou art making us more and more, not only to discern, but to long for, that rest which remaineth for the people of God. Not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon. Not that we are unwilling to bear our burdens, and stand in our lot in the great battle of the Lord; but when it is thy righteous will we shall be ready to lay down our arms and go forth. We discern the better life, and the better attainments, and long for them. We are weary of sin, and of temptations thereto. We are weary of our strength in things that are evil, and of our weakness in things that are good. We discern how imperfect are all things and the best things in human life, and have intimations that there is a land not far beyond us where all things shall perfect themselves. We desire to believe it; and we beseech of thee that this quickened desire may not leave us. But yet, may it not make us weary or discouraged in regard to the things of this life. May we be sustained by our faith and hope in heaven. Enable us to endure more patiently and more cheerfully the lot of this life. May we every one accept from the hands of the Lord the dispensation which we are in. Whether we be in wealth or in poverty, in strength or in weakness, in purity and joy or wickedness and pain, may we see the hand of the Lord in the dispensation of his providence toward us, and may we accept it with meekness and cheerfulness. And even when it seems mysterious to us, may we hear thee saying, "What I do now ye know not, but ye shall know hereafter." Grant that we may be able to perceive more and more of God in all things. May we discern the world not lonely, not abandoned, but administered by thy providence so that all things are under thine eye, no need forgotten, no tear forgotten, no groan nor sigh forgotten. No temptation, no sin, and no recovery from sin, is unknown to thee. May we believe that the Spirit of the Lord is all around about us, and may we be able to trust in the Lord in all our daily life and converse.

We pray for a better spirit in our households; for more gentleness and patience; for more fullness and richness of love.

And we pray that thou wilt enable us in the conduct of our business to gain victories; to carry a higher form of truth and justice among men, and to maintain it; and that thus we may become witnesses of the truth as it is in Jesus.

We pray for those who have been overtaken with temptation, and swept away. May they be recovered out of the snare of disaster into which they have been carried. May those who have abhorred evil be more and more solicitous to rescue those who have fallen therein.

Grant, O Lord, that the spirit which was in Jesus of love to his enemies, of love to those that did not love him, but hated him, be in us. May that spirit be in us which was also in him, of abhorring iniquity. He came to

cleanse it from out of the hearts of men, and out of the world; and may we work to the same end. So may we rise into the glorious sympathy of Jesus.

We pray that thou wilt bless, to-day, all those who everywhere mention thy name, and preach thy Gospel; and all those who lift up holy hands of supplication. Grant, we pray thee, that they may be united to thee more and more perfectly, and that the Spirit of Christ, filling them, may diffuse itself in a generous sympathy, so that we shall be drawn toward one another more and more.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy truth to be productive of reformation throughout our land. May justice and purity of administration characterize our time. We pray that we may be kept back from greediness and avarice and unprincipled gain. We pray that we may not be given over to the ambitions of wicked men. As this great nation hath in times past been guided by thee through multiform perils, may it still, under thy guidance, be built up in truth and justice. And may it be a light in the world, that nations, struggling, may discern it, and see a brighter future, and follow that, and in the knowledge of God find all the benefit which we have reaped so abundantly.

Grant, O Lord, that superstition and all its evils may be purged away from the great mass of men, and that they may rise up in their strength and come to their birthright, and be established in goodness and piety. Let that blessed day come for which we have been so long waiting—the latter-day. Let that day come when no man shall have occasion to say to his neighbor, Know ye the Lord? because all shall know him from the greatest unto the least.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Grant unto us, our Father, thine own Spirit. Interpret that Spirit to us. Grant in all the difficulties of knowing what to do in this life, that we may have the interpretation of sympathy and love, and its intuitions. Grant that this life of faith and hope, this sense of God present with us, may be in us and around us, so that it may sanctify our lives, exalt our motives, and throw over other men the light of heavenly intelligence; that we may not look upon them as mere factors of worldly things, but that we may see shining through the immortality that is in each man; and that we may feel the brother that is lingering and undevoloped, and yet longs to come forth; that we may be able to feel that we are parts one of another, and all parts of God. And so joined together, may we live the few years which remain to us, and then depart to join the blessed and perfected society in heaven: where we will praise the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, forevermore, *Amen.*

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